

Probation Oversight Commission Working Group  
Amendment to the Minutes of September 14, 2016  
Presentation on Behalf of Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council  
Carol Biondi, At-Large Community Representative, JJCC

Thank you for this opportunity to address a deeply held concern of mine for many years. The state of California provides counties with hundreds of millions of dollars per year specifically targeted at services for youth with little to no oversight or accountability. In Los Angeles that is over \$100M, and to say there is no transparency as to how all of these funds are being used for this purpose, is an understatement.

When I was at CSA, now BSCC, there was some oversight which the BSCC no longer has over three funds that make up that \$100M. \$60M comes from Juvenile Probation and Camp Funds, required to be provided in TANF type services. In 2008, Los Angeles began receiving \$30M in Youthful Offender Block grants that came with the realignment of youth to the counties who had not committed crimes that were strike felonies, in order to prevent youth from penetrating deeper into the system. However, there were no additional guidelines except that it should be coordinated with the \$30M in JJCPA legislation does have some requirements that are loosely followed by the department which we will go into more detail. These funds, by statute, are to be distributed in the community primarily by competitive bid, but only a very small portion of the funds are allocated this way and those grants are the source of the large amount of unspent funds each year because the CBO's never receive the full funds awarded to them. Most of these funds are held by the Department and distributed to other government agencies and are not working in the community for youth and families as the act envisioned. While this has always been the case, due to the number of youth in the locked facilities dropping over the years from 4,000 to less than 1,300, and on formal probation from 35,000 to slightly more than 10,000, these funds need to be in the community where the youth are; not sitting in non-interest bearing bank accounts where millions of unspent dollars are today.

There has been no corresponding increase in funds in the community to deal with the behaviors that used to bring these youth into the facilities or onto formal probation. For years I have expressed this concern to my colleagues saying my fear is that without more programs in the communities, no one will respond to the needs of these youth until it escalates to more serious crime and we will see them later or in the adult system.

As we see in the newspapers, juvenile crime is up in hotspots. Unfortunately there is no flexibility in this Department to respond with programs directed to it even with millions in the JJCPA account. I suggest you ask how much that is today? The number that is thrown around so often is \$21M in unspent funds. That was the number first used in January 2015, but it varies. Most of that unspent funding is allocated, but how much will ever be spent is another question. At one point last year, there was over \$59M in the JJCPA account.

As caseloads have dropped, the only thinking in this department has been to put youths on "voluntary probation" with the 236 youths and supervise them just like the 602's (kids on formal probation). Voluntary is below diversion, there is no oversight, yet they are checking in and out with them and referring these children to the same services

as the 602s. The kids think they are on probation and so do their friends. This safely keeps the JJCPA funds in the Department in order to pay probation officers. But these youths need different services which have not been developed with those millions of dollars. The Department has no idea if this works because Probation doesn't keep data on the 236 program, but every bit of national research says it doesn't work. You don't over-supervise children who don't need it. I have heard that a certain percent do end up on formal probation. This is outrageous and you can read about it in this week's Chronicle of Change.

We are very grateful to Interim Chief Cal Remington who understands that a 16-year program of \$30M a year that has never been evaluated needs to be and with a committee of Probation JJCC members and advocates this summer prepared a Statement of Work for an Evaluation of JJCPA and an Request For Services was released last week. We are at last on our way to reforming these wasted resources and improving the programs and its reach into the community. Thank you Cal and thank you to the Probation Work Group Commission for your interest in having us here today.